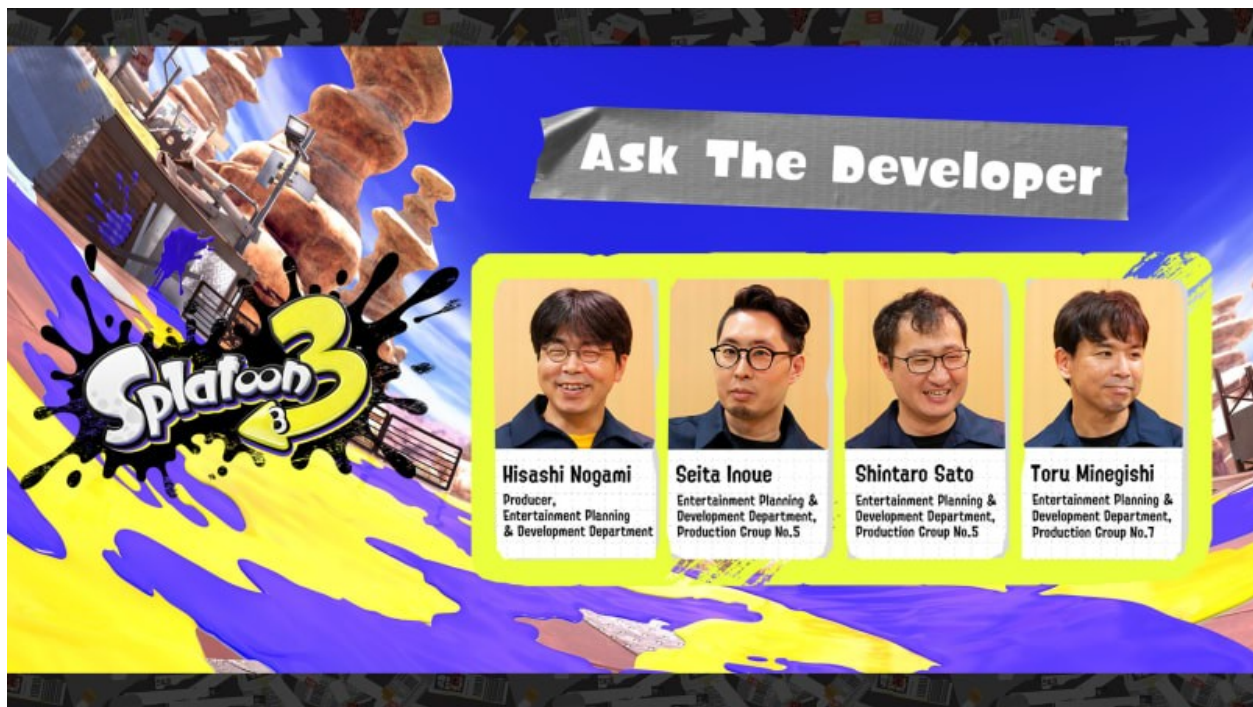




Ask the Developer Vol. 7, Splatoon 3-Part 1

- Content pre-recorded in accordance with current COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.
- This article has been translated from the original Japanese content.

In this volume of Ask the Developer, an interview series in which Nintendo developers convey in their own words Nintendo's thoughts about creating products and the specific points they are particular about, we're talking to developers behind the [Splatoon™ 3](#) game for the [Nintendo Switch](#) system, launching on Friday, **September 9**.

Check out the rest of the interview:

- [Part 2](#)
- [Part 3](#)
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Part 1: Counterculture

First, could you briefly introduce yourselves?

Hisashi Nogami (referred to as **Nogami** from this point on): Hello. I'm Nogami, the producer of the *Splatoon* series. My main role is to stand behind the development team and provide support, but I'm also responsible for overseeing the development of the franchise as a whole.

Seita Inoue (referred to as **Inoue** from this point on): Hi, I'm Inoue. I'm one of the game's directors and the art director. I was involved in planning, from how to develop the story to how to present the art of *Splatoon 3*, looking at the entire project holistically.

Shintaro Sato (referred to as **Sato** from this point on): Hi! I'm Sato, one of the directors on this title. I have been working on the development as a director with Inoue-san, but while Inoue-san is originally a designer, I am originally a programmer. I worked on online battles and gameplay cycles from a technical standpoint.

Toru Minegishi (referred to as **Minegishi** from this point on): Hello! I'm Minegishi, and I was in charge of the sound. Looking at the franchise as a whole, I decided on the direction for the sound, including the background music, and supported and supervised the sound team while composing the music myself.

Now, Nogami-san, could you please explain what kind of game *Splatoon* is?

Nogami: Yes. *Splatoon* is a series in which Inklings—squid that can also take on a humanoid form—splat ink to claim turf in Turf War battles. It's an action shooter, but the fun of the action and competitive gameplay is uniquely Nintendo. I think we can say that the *Splatoon* series has grown in real-time along with its players as they've enjoyed the online battles and created excitement around the events themselves.



Thank you. What do you mean when you say the series has grown with its players?

Inoue: For example, this title is set in the chaotic city of Splatsville, a densely populated area crowded with buildings from various eras. We decided on chaos as the theme for this title because Team Chaos won the "Chaos vs. Order" Splatfest, the final online battle event of [*Splatoon 2*](#).



So, you decided on the theme of the next game based on the results of the Splatfest that players participated in? Does that mean even the developers didn't know until the end which team would win or what the theme of the next title would be?

Inoue: Yes. I watched it all the way through without having a clue how it would turn out.

Sato: Well, I at least had some ideas in my head, imagining things like how the game would look if Team Order won. (Laughs)

Nogami: But it was not until we saw the results that we began to think about it seriously.

Inoue: So many players participate in the *Splatoon* series' Splatfests that even the developers can't predict the outcome. In the world of the *Splatoon* series, we create each game's design and sound, and the principles of characters' behaviors by reflecting how players have actually played the franchise. So, the trends and values in the Inkling world change significantly depending on the outcome of the final Splatfest. Therefore, the chaotic Splatville is a city that rapidly developed with the arrival of the "Chaos" craze after the Splatfest.

Sato: Since what happens to the Inkling world is affected by the actions and reactions of players, we have no idea how the world will change.

Inoue: This may be something a bit unusual for a Nintendo game. It is also the year 2022 in the Inkling world. In many other games, for example, the characters do not age even if time passes in the real world, or time moves forward in the game regardless of the time in the real world. But in *Splatoon 1*, *2*, and *3*, the same amount of time has passed in the squid world as in the real world. Therefore, the characters grow, and cities and cultures develop over time. For example, this character is called Murch, and he has grown so much taller in the five years between *Splatoon 2* and *Splatoon 3*.



Murch in *Splatoon 2*



Murch in *Splatoon 3*

Nogami: We wanted players to feel that the time in the game passes with their own real lives. In that sense, we could say that this is a game franchise in which players and developers walked side by side over the seven years since the first release. In terms of design, we were conscious that the game is set in modern times, and we depicted the world based on street culture. The characters are also dressed in street-style wear, including t-shirts and sneakers.



I see. So, when you created the *Splatoon* world, you accounted for the fact that the same amount of time passes between the game world and the real world. Speaking of t-shirts, I remember the developers wearing t-shirts in the Iwata Asks interview on the first title, which left quite an impression on me. Whose idea was that?

Sato: Well, that was... so to speak, the vibe of the moment. We didn't discuss anything beforehand, but since we had made t-shirts that appear in the game, we thought, "why not wear these since we have them?" (Laughs)

Minegishi: *Splatoon* was not known to the public back then, so we thought we had to promote it actively. So, we wore the t-shirts to leverage the visuals and promote the game.

So, it was like an in-house venture.

Nogami: Since those days, we have been striving to get as many people as possible to know and remember *Splatoon*, even through a small opportunity like this.

When you say, "since those days," does that mean you are still striving now?

Nogami: The struggle continues today... (Laughs)



Ah, you were all well preprepared. (Laughs) Seeing you all in the t-shirts makes me really feel that I'm talking to the *Splatoon* developers.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Now that you are dressed in your now-familiar t-shirts, I want to continue our conversation. You discussed how time passes and how cultures and values change, but could you be more specific and tell us how you have created and changed the world of *Splatoon*?

Inoue: As I mentioned earlier, we depict the world based on street culture. This is an important aspect when designing the Inkling world. We chose street style partly because of its contemporary design, but the street culture is often derived from what we call counterculture. In other words, it implies some kind of rebellion against the mainstream.



Considering this, we depicted a world of simple, mischievous street culture in the first title. In the second title, we created a world in which urban sophistication is trendy, to counter the world in the first title. In the third game, however, we tried to express that "sophistication has gone stale but disorder is now fresh" to counter the world of the second title. In this way, we felt that we could depict the world of "Chaos," which is the theme of this title, but also express the transition caused by the countercultural rebellion. This is how we reflected the results of the Splatfest to the trends in the Inkling world.

Nogami: We also came up with the Japanese keyword "Bankara" at this time. In the Japanese version, we use the term "Haikara,"(1) to imply an advanced and sophisticated culture from other countries throughout the series. In contrast, "Bankara"(2) in the third title implies something rough and a bit wild. "Bankara," a term used in the Japanese version of this game,

represents a counterculture to "Haikara." The "Bankara" culture became popular as Inklings tried to restore what was being lost. In the Japanese version, the word is used in the name of the city where this title's story takes place. In versions outside of Japan, we named the city so that you can tell it is in the countryside as opposed to an urban area to express a sense of counterculture.

(1) A term used in Japan at the end of the 19th century to describe Western fashions and lifestyles as well as the people who enjoyed them. The term was coined in reference to the "high collar" of shirts, which symbolized Western-style clothing at the time. Later, the term also came to imply "progressive," "modern," and "fashionable."

(2) A concept that arose in the early 20th century as a reaction against the "high-collar" Western culture flowing into Japan. Those who claimed to be "Bankara" deliberately dressed and acted wildly.

In the Japanese version, I recall that the setting was called "Haikara City" (Inkopolis Plaza in English versions) in the first title, and it was called "Haikara Square" (Inkopolis Square in English versions) in the second title. So, you created a setting named "Bankara Town" in the Japanese version (Splatsville in English versions) which counters the previous settings?

Sato: Yes. We created a tentative document that gives us a sense of distance between the three cities and discussed the positioning and background of the three titles.

Inoue: As you can see, Inkopolis Plaza in the first title and Inkopolis Square in the second title are both located in the heart of the city, and they are only about as far apart as Shibuya Station and Harajuku Station on the train in Tokyo. In terms of distance, it is about 1.2 kilometers (approx. 0.75 miles). However, we were discussing how we wanted Splatsville to be set in a region far away from the locations in the previous two titles and with a completely different climate. We prepared a map like this so that we could develop the game with an understanding of the geographical distances.



Sato: Splatville is barely accessible from Inkopolis Plaza and Inkopolis Square by taking a single local train line. The distance is similar to that from Tokyo to Atami or thereabouts in Japan. It is in a rural area that would take a few hours to drive to on the highway. For people in the United States, it may be like driving to Las Vegas from Los Angeles. Although geographically quite distant, highways that opened up in the five years between the second and third titles allow convenient access to the area.

Inoue: The Splatlands developed rapidly because the construction of the bridge across the sea made it more accessible from the city center.



Sato: While Inkopolis, the setting of the previous titles, was a fashionable and youthful area, the Splatlands, where Splatville is located, is much more spacious, open, and full of nature. A place like this, far from the urban center, became popular after the final Splatfest and developed rapidly. For example, Scorch Gorge is a stage in a national park with strangely shaped stone pillars lined up.



You can see a spectacular view if you look around from the air with the new action, Squid Spawn. Also, Undertow Spillway is a huge spillway that used to be in operation but has been neglected and dilapidated over the years. The place has recently been renovated as a battle stage and is starting to catch on.



I see. So as time passes in our world, the world in *Splatoon* changes as well. I think I now understand what you meant by the world of *Splatoon* being set in the present day.

Inoue: To add depth to the game, I believe it is important for players to feel as if the world of *Splatoon* exists in real life.

Minegishi: In that sense, music is also an important element. The music played during battles is not mere background music of the game but also hit songs played by popular bands in the Inklings world. These are the songs the Inklings listen to every day during Turf War battles to hype themselves. During the early development of the first title, Inoue-san said, “Maybe we could start by considering what kind of band is playing this background music.” Although I was a bit taken aback at the time, in retrospect, I believe this was an important suggestion that has led us to create a unique sound for the series.

Inoue: I thought if the music can account for not only bands existing in this world, but also things like their history, the relationship between their

members and how their approaches to life changed over time, it would add depth to the Inkling world.

Bands in the game playing the music that players listen to is a feature you wouldn't see in many other games.

Minegishi: Not only the bands' music, but also their names and the song titles appear in the game. In the third title, we have a band with in-game characters as its members. We also have album covers. For example, this is the album cover of the main band in this game, C-Side.



I see that details like these are contributing to make the Inkling World feel more realistic.

Minegishi: As Inoue-san explained earlier, the world in the second title counters the first and the world in the third title counters the second. We created the music considering this transition. What was at the forefront of music in the first game was a fast, playful and summery feel using just a few notes. For C-Side, which plays a central role in the third game's music, we made the deep bass and upbeat melody stand out in their music while reminding the audience of the sound from the first game.

Nogami: One of the things we adjusted to express the realistic changes in the Inkling world was the characteristics of its trendy music. This changed according to the events and cultures of each title's time period: in the first title seven years ago, in the second set five years ago, and in this title...Even if we do not depict everything in the game, we are always considering a variety of details like that.

Inoue: Even with a single illustration, the team looks at not only its quality as an end product, but also whether or not it feels realistic as a key factor in evaluation.

Minegishi: Even if the band members don't appear in the game as characters, players still enjoy the bands and their place in the world of *Splatoon*. Perhaps, something like this happens because we create such a detailed setting.



I see. Not only did you reflect the results of player experience in the game, but you also put the effort into creating details that are not

visible on the surface, so that players enjoy the experience even more by expanding their imaginations of what's happening in the Inkling world. I now see what Nogami-san meant when he said that the developers walked side by side with players.

Ask the Developer Vol. 7, Splatoon 3-Part 2

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Check out the rest of the interview:

- [Part 1](#)
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Part 2: Incorporating each developer's strengths into the game

So far, we have asked you about how the world of *Splatoon* was created. You mentioned that you place great importance on portraying a world that seems real, but where do you get your ideas for the weapons and gear that appear in the game?

Inoue: Weapons in this game are sometimes inspired by items we used to play with growing up. For example, the Splat Brella weapon was inspired by my childhood memories of play-fighting with umbrellas.

Another good example is stationery. When I was in elementary school, some kids had very elaborate and high-tech-looking pencil cases that were popular in Japan, and I was envious of them. A weapon, Triple Inkstrike, was inspired by these pencil cases.

Of course, some of the weapons were created because we simply thought it would be cool to have something like them. In this title, we have a weapon class called the stringer, which was inspired by a fishing rod. We designed it to look like a *Splatoon* weapon, without making it look like a firearm.

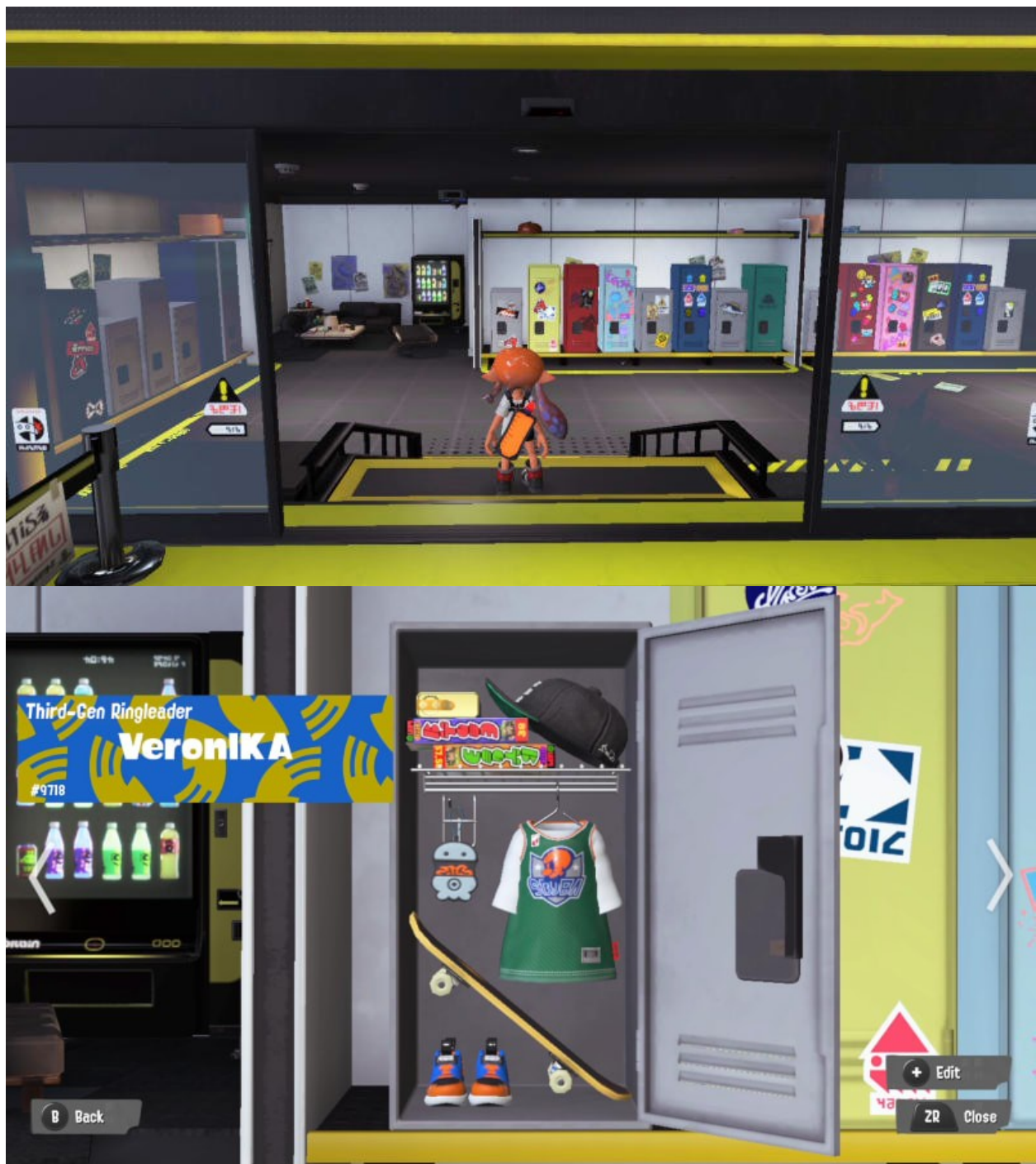
There are new weapons called Splatanas. One of these, the Splatana Stamper, was inspired by a date stamp(3) provided by Nintendo when we joined.

(3) A useful device used in Japan for stamping a date, name, and department name on a document all at once. The year, month, and date can be adjusted manually by dialing the numbers. It is used instead of a signature to review documents.

Nogami: Of course, we created a background story within the Inkling world for each of these weapons. For example, consumer electronics and art supply manufacturers of the Inkling world have joined in the weapon manufacturing business. However, since the Turf War battle trend has gained popularity, even the fishing equipment manufacturers have decided to join the Turf War battle industry in [*Splatoon 3*](#). (Laughs) The impact of Turf War battles in the Inkling world continues to grow throughout the series. In the first title, the Turf War battles were just a trend among some Inklings. However, in the third title, it is positioned more like a sport that residents in the Inkling world have been familiar with since childhood. It's like how people in Latin America feel about soccer.

So, you filled the Inkling world with background stories that seem real and are inspired from your personal experiences. By the way, players each have a place where they can display all kinds of weapons this time. Could you tell us more about it?

Inoue: You're referring to lockers, a new feature added in this title.



As Nogami-san mentioned earlier, Turf War battles are considered a sport in the Inklings world. So, we thought it would be realistic and interesting if each player had their own locker and could decorate it as they liked by arranging their weapons and items. Looking back on my high school days, I remember the passing moments I spent in front of lockers during breaks more than the time I spent studying in class.



Nogami: The inside of a locker can tell you a lot about the person who owns it.

Inoue: I agree. A person on a baseball team might have a baseball bat in their locker. Someone who loves to read might have many books. We wanted to recreate in this world the idea that the contents of a locker represent the owner themselves, so we've made it possible for players to arrange their favorite weapons and items that they've collected in the game however they like.



Sato: Some people might leave their locker a mess, while others may keep things neat and tidy... I'm sure the lockers will represent the unique personality of each player.

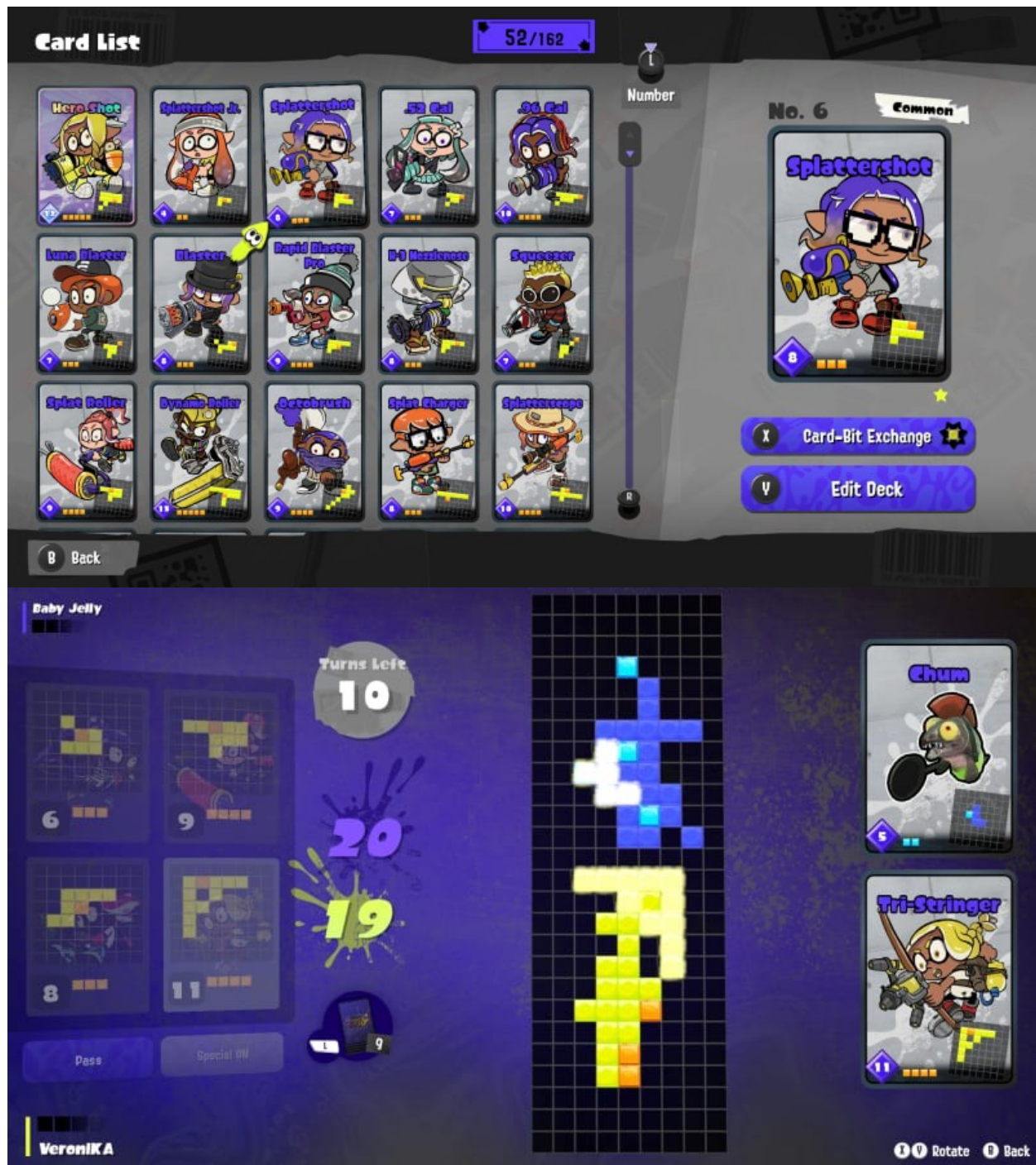
Nogami: I think the same is true for office desks. (Laughs) You can also see what's inside other players' lockers, and I thought this would be interesting because you get an idea of what kind of person the owner is by seeing their locker. For instance, if you see shoeboxes of various brands in the locker, you would think that this person must really love sneakers.



Sato: We also have figurines of fictional superheroes of the Inklings world. We have an extensive collection of items that are very enticing for players to collect. In previous *Splatoon* titles, we didn't place much importance on features not directly related to battles—instead, importance was placed on different ways to battle. Because of this, I feel like the ultimate goal for many players was just to become very good at battling. In this title, we didn't want that to be the only reason to play the game. We also wanted players to feel that they want to play battles again because they can get items and collect more. I think we were able to provide more ways for players to enjoy this game.

Nogami: Besides lockers, there are other new features where players can enjoy collecting items.

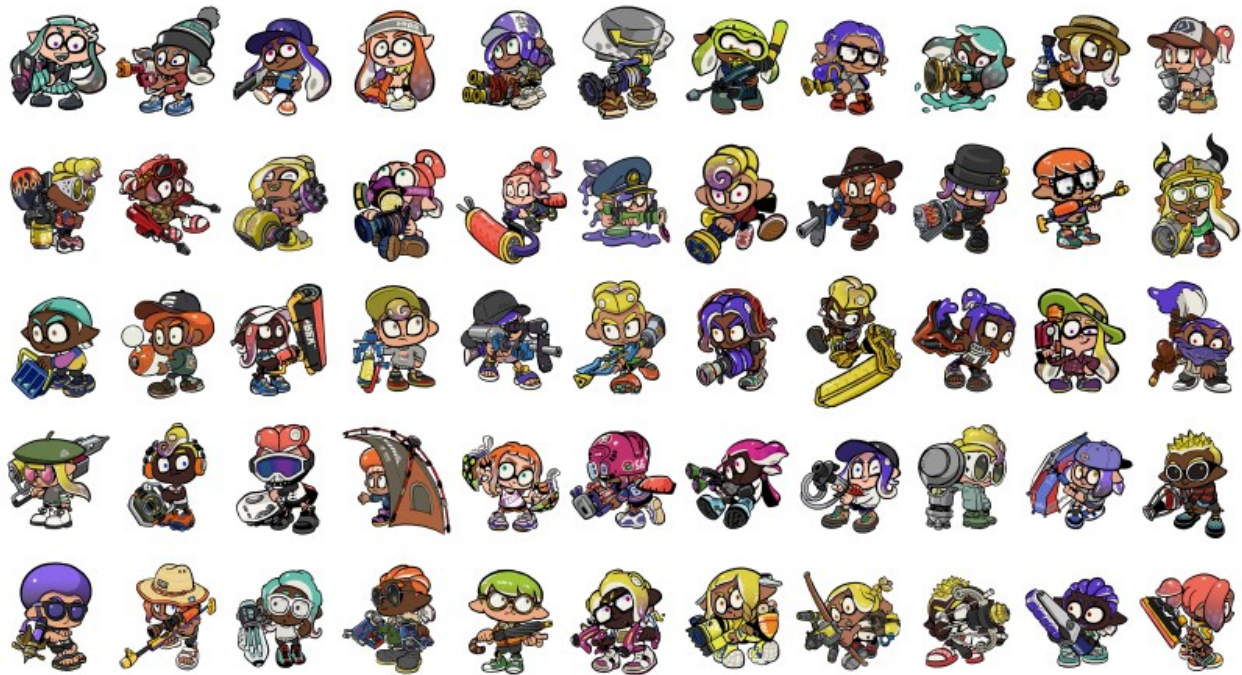
A good example is the card game, Tableturf Battle. You can collect cards in many different ways, and you can play a card game using them.



Splatoon is an action shooter, right? But you can also play a card game?

Nogami: Yes. Cards are fun just to collect, right? (Laughs) I was really into collecting cards as a child, but in this game, cards are not only for collecting. They can also be used in Tableturf Battle to play games.

Inoue: Card games have recently gained a lot of popularity in the Inklings world. We thought this kind of hobby feature would make the world depicted in this game more convincing. The cards were all drawn by members of the development team, who are good at drawing this type of illustration. I like chibi character designs because they were popular in my generation, and we thought cards used for card games often had this kind of design.



Sato: I believe that players will also feel nostalgia when they see this kind of homage to things we were all obsessed with as children.

Hearing these stories about the design of the weapons, lockers, and card games might bring back nostalgic memories. Are the personal experiences of the developers also reflected in the music?

Minegishi: Yes. The music I listened to at a young and emotionally sensitive age, and how I listened to it, may be reflected in the music of the Inklings world. For example, if you fall in love with a certain band, you might research and listen to their old songs. Or you might get excited imagining what their next single will sound like! If that band you liked were to go on hiatus suddenly, you'd probably feel quite sad about it. But those band members may go on to start solo projects or form another band with an unexpected artist. You might even become more interested in this new artist than the band member you were previously a fan of.

Yes, I feel that such stories are not uncommon.

Minegishi: Actually, these things also happen in the Inkling world. The main band in the first title, Squid Squad, has gone on hiatus, but its members, except one, form a new band called Front Roe in this title. Some players who know the music of the old band might be able to tell who they are right away after listening to their current music.



Squid Squad



Front Roe

I see. Some band fans want to follow not only the band's music itself but also things surrounding the band, including its roots and the relationships among the members.

Minegishi: Exactly. And when you see your favorite band releasing an album for the first time in five years, that alone makes you happy and scream, "Wow!" right? (Laughs)

Yes, that's true. (Laughs) Am I right to assume that you share this kind of background setting with the people in charge of composing when creating music?

Minegishi: Yes. For example, a person in charge of composing, who we thought would enjoy creating the heavy and wild music of C-Side, wrote the songs of C-Side. On the other hand, different personnel, who we thought would convey the characteristics of other bands well, wrote the music for other bands. When multiple people work together to compose songs, we usually try to blend them so that each person's musical tastes don't come out too much. Considering the band structure and background story, each person in charge of composing is assigned tasks that make the most of their talent and uniqueness when writing songs.

Nogami: The characteristics of the designers are also reflected a lot in the gear.

Sato: Normally, you would have an idea of what you want to create in a game and then look for people with the skills to create it. However, in *Splatoon*, we often try to maximize the strengths of development staff, like "OK, this person is good at this, so let's incorporate their strengths into the game."

Inoue: I think something like this happens in both the real and Inkling worlds. I think those who love shoes would probably be better suited to be shoemakers, and those who love clothes would make clothes. Good designs and sounds are created because there are people who are good at what they do and enjoy it.

So that is how you leverage the developers' backgrounds.

Minegishi: Yes. The sound staff also oozes out the influences from music that they usually listen to, along with their favorite sound texture and melody transitions, even if their expressions aren't intentional.

Nogami: I believe that each person's personal experiences, happy memories from childhood, hobbies and skills lead to the variety of elements contained in the series.

Sato: Many developers seemed to have been worried about whether it was really OK for them to take so much liberty and incorporate their personal taste, but I gave them a push saying, "Don't worry, just be yourself!"
(Laughs)

Inoue: The directors then had to think carefully about combining and presenting these various elements into a single game. For the game's music, we created album covers to convey each band's image. We also decided to present a wide variety of gear using a catalog. We tried to present the items born from various people's ideas in a digestible, organized, and enjoyable way so that they are not presented in a completely unorganized manner. I think this process is comparable to editing a magazine.

Nogami: That said, what we depict in the game is only a tiny part of the Inkling world. What we don't see in the game is left to players' imaginations. We developers also imagine and think about many aspects that cannot be seen on the game screen. However, if we include all our ideas, there will be no room for imagination in the future, so we always spend time deciding how much we incorporate our ideas into the current Inkling world.

Sato: We believe players are passionately studying the Inkling world. But actually, we, the developers, are also still in the middle of our own research. (Laughs)

Ask the Developer Vol. 7, Splatoon 3-Part 3

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Check out the rest of the interview:

- [Part 1](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
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Part 3: The feeling that there's an actual person

Well, I think we have a good understanding of what kind of background the Inkling world is built upon. Above all, it's an interesting attempt to have mechanisms and such that allow you to get to know the personalities of the other players outside of online battles. Now, let's talk about the online battles (4), the main attraction of the series. Could you tell us how you approached online multiplayer for [Splatoon 3](#)?

Sato: First, let's talk about the lobby, which is the gateway to online matches.

(4) Any Nintendo Switch Online membership (sold separately) and Nintendo Account required for online features. Not available in all countries. Internet access required for online features. Terms apply. nintendo.com/switch-online

The lobby? This is before you enter online battles, right?

Sato: Yes. This is the place where you meet up with your online opponents and teammates. The lobby did exist in previous games, but this time we put in quite a lot of effort so that players can have fun even while waiting for the match to start. The lobby is a facility packed with the latest technology in the Inklings world, and players can freely roam around this space.

Especially, the first thing we would like players to try out is the test range. As the name suggests, this is a place where players can try out their own weapons, but they can also wait for their opponent while brushing up on their ink-shooting skills.

Nogami: You can warm up before you go into online battles.

Sato: Also, in the lobby, 3D images of friends you're meeting up with or players you happen to meet will be projected as ghosts. You can actually see what they are doing.

Does that mean that you see what the other players you're meeting up with are doing, projected in real time?

Sato: Yes. We've implemented these features and mechanics to make the waiting time fun for players, but I think players will be able to feel the presence of others right then and there, even before the battle starts.

In terms of being able to feel the presence of others, there was a drawing function up till the previous title, wasn't there?

Sato: Yes, there was. The first *Splatoon* game displayed illustrations that players drew and posted in the mailbox in the game, as it would be linked to the Miiverse (5) functionality on Wii U, and players were able to see others' messages that way.

(5) A network service implemented into the Wii U system. It was a community service where players playing the same game could empathize and interact with each other through drawings and messages. This service ended on November 8, 2017.



We talked about how this was similar to graffiti in street culture. I think it fit in well with the Inklings world. So, given that [Splatoon 2](#) launched on the [Nintendo Switch](#) system, which does not have the Miiverse functionality, we incorporated a game-specific function to allow players to post their own handwritten messages in the mailbox.



Likewise in *Splatoon 3*, players can drop a handwritten message in the mailbox.



Nogami: In the sense that you write something while expecting someone to read it, we could say that this is also a form of communication between players.

Sato: Yes, I agree. After all, I think the most important thing here for us is to create a world where players feel that there are actual players other than themselves. The feeling that “there's an actual person behind this drawing.” I hope that players will get the sense that there is an actual person, not a CPU, on the other side of the screen, and that the actions of players playing the game have an impact on the streets of the Inkling world. I think that the locker we mentioned before is one such example. Someone from somewhere creates a locker, and it shows up in another person's locker room. Even without the hand-drawing function, you can get a sense that there's someone out there who decorated a locker like this by looking inside their locker.

A sense that there is someone actually controlling the character on the other side of the screen.

Sato: Yes, that's right. In the lobby, there are other functions such as the “notifications.”



If your friend starts a match, a notification will be sent over. Once received, notifications become available in players' in-game notification list. Also, ghosts of your friends show up in the lobby, so players are able to check the notification by talking to them as well. Players can also drop in to the battle from the notification that lets them know the battle has started, so it is easier to play online with your friends.



So, it's now easier for players to invite each other?

Sato: Yes, this notification function can only be used between friends at the time of launch, but we plan to add a function so that players will be able to send notifications to players outside of their friends in future updates. To be more specific, even if you have not become friends directly, you will be able to send out notifications to each other by entering the same keyword. For example, if you round up other players using a specific keyword on social media, etc., it will be possible to receive notifications from players who saw the post and entered the same keyword. Notifications aren't limited to those sent by players you're battling with. There are also status report functions like "Level up!" or "Rank up!" I think these can be used to create a more casual connection between players.

Nogami: It would be fun if keywords like #AfterWorkTurfWarClub or #UniSquidClub started trending.

I see. Indeed, in online games, you may feel anxious that you're the only one playing the game, if you can't see other players moving in real time.

Nogami: In that sense, I think the most exciting thing for players might be to realize that many other players are actually playing *Splatoon 3* together. Just going to a city with lots of people makes you feel a little excited, you know? I think it is similar to that kind of feeling.

Sato: Of course, since the early days of the series' development, we have always put a great emphasis on creating a fun experience even when playing alone, and this game is no different. However, as a culmination of the series so far, we thought about ways to enhance the support to create even more fun when playing with others. That is, through various events such as the Splatoon Koshien (6) and the Monthly League Battle (7), we have realized that people find the experience of playing together to achieve a common goal much more appealing than we expected. And I realized that those players' excitement would create a ripple effect and eventually influence other players positively. Therefore, for this title, we put even more effort into making it easier to play together with friends and other players.

(6) An official Splatoon Turf War tournament to determine the best team in Japan. The qualifying rounds are held in regional or online tournaments, and the winning teams compete in the national finals. It has been held five times so far.

(7) A monthly online tournament for Splatoon 2 held in Japan in which teams of four competed in League matches on a designated date and time. Held until June 2022.

Similarly, Splatfests, which led to the theme of the world for *Splatoon 3*, are also big events that attract many players.

Inoue: Many of the past Splatfests looked and felt like live concerts, but this time the theme is “Festival.”

"Festivals?" For Japan, it's the ones with night vendors, right?

Inoue: Yes. How we crafted Splatfests this time is by adding a modern twist to the traditional festival in Splatsville, the main location of this game, that has existed for years. That's why floats parade through town but at the same time, we made sure that the presentation re-creates the energy of live concerts.



Nogami: There are some regions that put their heart and soul into festivals, you know? For Japan it's like the Danjiri Festival (8) in Kishiwada or the Gion Festival (9) in Kyoto. Maybe the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro is a good example for overseas. Likewise, the residents of Splatsville pour a lot of energy into their festivals.

(8) A festival held in Kishiwada City, Osaka every year in September. It is said to have originated in the 18th century, mid-Edo period, as a festival to pray for a good harvest. The highlight of the festival is the dynamic

“Yarimawashi,” in which large floats called “Danjiri” dash through streets and round corners while maintaining their speed.

(9) A festival held in Kyoto City, Kyoto, said to have originated in the 9th century, when people carried portable shrines to quell a plague. Various rituals are held for about a month from July 1, but among them, the “Yamahoko Junko” float procession, which takes place on the pre-festival, July 17, and the latter festival, July 24, attracts visitors from all over the country. It is one of the summer attractions in Kyoto.

Inoue: This time, we prepared something called the Sneak Peek, where players can enjoy the preparation period up to the actual Splatfest. Like in the Gion Festival, I think the excitement builds little by little, as more decorations show up in the city with lanterns on streets and floats being built to prepare for the main event of the Yamahoko Junko procession. We wanted to express this feeling in the game as well.

Sato: That excitement you feel as the day of the festival gets closer and closer. The Gion Festival is most famous for the Yamahoko Junko float procession, but it actually starts on July 1. The Sneak Peek for this title’s Splatfests also begins about a week before the main event. At the Sneak Peek, players are divided into teams that they voted for, and the results from the Sneak Peek are also reflected in the final result of the Splatfest. So even for players who have plans on the day of the Splatfest, it will be easier for them to participate in the event.

I see. It’s designed so that players are able to soak in the sights and energy specific to festivals, and also to allow more people to participate.

Inoue: By the way, the three members of Deep Cut, the news personalities of Splatville, are descendants of the families that have overseen the Splatville festival for generations. They themselves love their hometown, and they are also very popular among the locals.



Nogami: On the day of the Splatfest, Deep Cut will parade through the streets to liven up the festival with their music. I hope everyone gets a chance to see this in the game. With many aspects of various festivals mixed together, it is a perfect festival for the city of chaos.

Is the music by Deep Cut also a mixture of various styles?

Minegishi: Yes. It's truly a mix of different elements—just perfect for a city of chaos. Shiver and Frye each bring their own vocals from different cultures to the EDM (electronic dance music)-based tracks created by Big Man, the manta ray. While Frye sings with a melody that makes you feel as if a desert is in sight, Shiver sings with riffs and runs that remind people of traditional Japanese singing. And adding this on top of a Brazilian-style beat...it is really a mishmash.

It's lively and fun to listen to, but it sounds like a lot of work for those who put it all together.

Minegishi: Yes. Our sound director composed the music, and oh my... He really gave it everything he had!

Everyone: (Laughs)

Minegishi: The person who did the vocals for Shiver is a singer of traditional Japanese folk songs. Frye, on the other hand, was performed by a singer-songwriter with a jazz background.

I see. It is interesting that people with expertises that seem totally unrelated to one another are coming together to create one piece of music.

Minegishi: With the theme of chaos, I feel that even these types of seemingly odd combinations fit right into the game. We hope that more people will get to enjoy the game while feeling the festival vibes and this chaotic world.

Nogami: It would be great if players invite their family or friends to try it together and casually join the *Splatoon* world through events like the Splatfests.

Ask the Developer Vol. 7, Splatoon 3-Part 4

- Content pre-recorded in accordance with current COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.
 - This article has been translated from the original Japanese content.
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Check out the rest of the interview:

- [Part 1](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
 - [Part 3](#)
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Part 4: Now is the chance to dive into the Inkling world!

Based on our conversations thus far, it's become clear to me that the backstory that makes the Inkling world more believable, as well as

the fact that there are many players to play together, contribute to the fun appeal of *Splatoon*. However, this is the third entry in the series. People who haven't played the last two titles may feel uncomfortable about jumping right in from the third title, but how do you feel about that?

Sato: I see what you mean. For players new to the series, I recommend starting with the single-player [Story Mode](#). While following the story for this title, players can also get the hang of the basic mechanics for action shooters. We've developed this Story Mode to blend all the good stuff learned from our work on the previous two titles. So, I believe this mode has ended up being "The Best Of" version, in which players can take time to savor the fun, sweet taste of action shooting. (Laughs) In particular, we've tweaked the early levels to better ease players into the game's shooter mechanics. There are many levels in which we really focused on making the controls feel comfortable. So, we can easily recommend these particular levels to not only those who are playing for the first time, but also to friends who come over to play and ask if they could give it a try.

Inoue: Although the lore of Story Mode has a connection to the previous two entries, it also stands on its own in this game, so please rest assured that you can play without any worries. Once you have played through and are interested in the past entries, you can check out the [Splatoon Base website](#) (available in English and Japanese) to learn more about the history, and I think you'll be able to enjoy it even more.

Sato: Of course, for those of you who have played the past games in this series, this mode will reveal the answers to all the mysteries that existed up until now, so I definitely hope you'll give it a shot. While enjoying the Inklings world through Story Mode, you can improve your skills and, by unlocking more levels, you can acquire various items which will increase the ways to enjoy the game.

Nogami: Initially, the Hero Shot is the only available weapon, but as you progress through Story Mode, there will be levels that you can challenge with other weapons.

Sato: Yes, you can keep going while trying out various types of weapons, or you can also reach the end just with the Hero Shot, as you enhance it along the way. I hope everyone will enjoy the Story Mode in a variety of ways to see what happens at the end. In addition to Story Mode, I also hope that you'll find your favorite mode by trying various modes such as the online Turf War, of course, and [Salmon Run](#) (10), which has been greatly enhanced this time.

(10) A mode added from [Splatoon 2](#). In Salmon Run for *Splatoon 3*, up to four players can team up to cooperate and collect Power Eggs by defeating the Salmonids. Depending on the number of Power Eggs collected, players receive points that can be exchanged for items that are useful in battle. Any Nintendo Switch Online membership (sold separately) and Nintendo Account required for online features. Not available in all countries. Internet access required for online features. Terms apply. nintendo.com/switch-online

I see. It's reassuring to hear that players are able to learn the story and action shooter mechanics at their own pace, even if *Splatoon 3* is their first experience with the series... That said, I do think it takes a lot of courage for people starting out with *Splatoon 3* to try out an online battle where they'll encounter lots of experienced players.

Sato: I think most everyone would feel nervous about their first stage or first online battle. But I don't think the answer is simply lowering the bar and making things easier to remove that fear. In fact, since there are probably a lot of people starting out with *Splatoon 3*, that nervous excitement can be enjoyable if players are able to jump into the action, thinking that now is the chance, while lots of new players are around. Also, it may be a good idea to ask Judd if there's anything you don't understand in battles. This time, Judd will be in the lobby, and not only does he kindly teach you about battles, but he will also let you try out what you have just learned. Whether you are a first-timer or not, please ask Judd lots of things.





Nogami: This may sound a bit redundant, but what we can do for the players who play this game is to bring in as many people as possible for them to play with. Given this, I think there will be many new people playing a *Splatoon* game for the first time when [Splatoon 3](#) launches. Of course, there will be experienced players too. At the same time, there are many others who are standing on the same starting line together to jump into the gameplay. That's why we think this is the best time to take the first step forward into the world of *Splatoon*.

If you join now, you can start your freshman year together with everyone else, right?

Nogami: Yes, that's right. So, in the beginning, a lot of the matches will be with newcomers. Once you start to get used to the game, maybe you can start interacting with more senior players.

Inoue: And also, having a chaotic atmosphere makes it easier to jump in. Maybe it's just me, but when the third installment in a movie trilogy comes out, you sometimes think, "Well, I haven't seen the first or second one, but I might as well take a look..." I personally really like the third movie in the trilogy. (Laughs) I think the first movie sets up the lore, and the second one delves into it from a slightly different angle. Then characters from the first two come together in the third movie! ...That sort of thing. It really has a chaotic atmosphere, you know? As for the *Splatoon* series, this title will be the third entry in the trilogy. Similarly, while including the elements from 1 and 2, we've packed plenty of new gameplay and features as the third

iteration, which brings the most amount of excitement. It's our hope that players will be able to enjoy regardless of which mode they start out with.



Sato: From the developers' perspective, we created this game with a desire to bring everyone together, from those who have played before to those who are starting from this game. We plan to have more events than ever before, so we suspect that this game will bring the most energy in the series.

Nogami: Even for those who were on the fence about this franchise but were hesitant since they haven't had the chance to jump in, I think now is the chance to dive into the Inkling world! (Laugh)

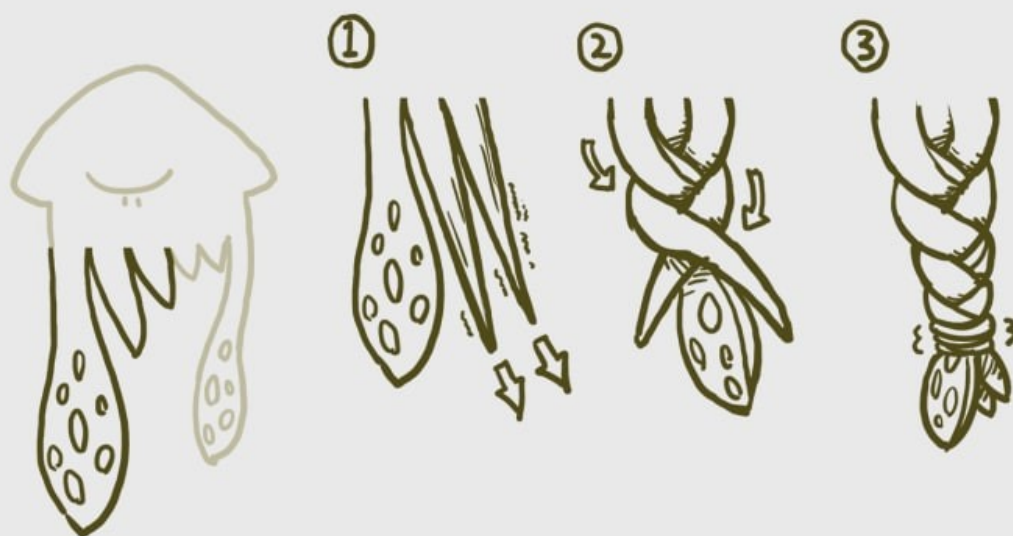
Thank you very much. Lastly, could you give a few comments to players who are looking forward to this title?

Sato: Yes, of course. I was involved with the development of the past *Splatoon* games, and I believe *Splatoon 3* has turned out to be a really good game, leveraging all the experiences we have had so far. Especially if you look at the battle aspect, there are dynamic and exhilarating Special Weapons from *Splatoon 1* that have been modified for this entry. There are also reliable and classic Special Weapons that have been passed on from *Splatoon 2*. On top of that, there are new ones in *Splatoon 3* that require some skills to use... I think the variety of weapons alone is enough to make the game fun. While enjoying these game components, we would like players to eventually try out the new features, like lockers and Tableturn Battle, so that they're able to fully immerse themselves in the Inkling world

while having a good time in online battles. And of course, there will be free updates coming in the future, so I hope everyone looks forward to them even after the release. In addition to new weapons and stages, we are also planning to add modes such as X Battle and League Battle.

Inoue: All four of us here have been in the Inkling world for about seven years since the first game, and personally, this whole process feels more similar to presenting the results of our observations and research rather than creating a game. In the Inkling world, various trends are constantly changing, organically creating a culture, just as the results of the Splatfests influence the way of thinking for the Inklings. We're not the only ones creating the game. The passion and involvement of all the fans are a part of the process, and I think that is one of the aspects that makes the Inkling world feel more real. I hope that players will jump in and enjoy playing in this world, and build the future Inkling world together with us.

One last thing. Players' characters can be customized in more ways than ever. Options have been greatly enhanced, from hair to even the shapes of eyebrows, to create the characters you want to play as. Players can really push the envelope on their look and style, so feel free to be whoever you want to play as in the Inkling world.





Minegishi: Actually, there's one thing that I forgot to mention... We've tried to be creative with sounds in different areas of the game, so that players can feel the spaciousness even more. The director conveyed to me his vision of wanting to add a sense of depth, as if playing in a large space. For example, for the same sound effect, we adjusted how it reverberates depending on how far away a character is from other things. This makes those distances feel more realistic. And in Splatville, we tried to find the

best ways for players to feel the bustling, living and breathing sounds of the expanded city, as if you have just landed there. And even for the structure of the music itself, we tried to create it in a way that gives players an impression that it's large in scale. We have put our efforts into creating an expansive sound experience, so we hope you will listen intently and enjoy it as well.

There's also a live concert planned, isn't there?

Minegishi: Yes. We're planning to host the first *Splatoon 3* concert at Nintendo Live, which will take place at Tokyo Big Sight from October 8 to October 9. Every time we hold a *Splatoon* live performance, we end up watching the show like nervous parents watching over their child, while the audiences cheer the characters on with smiles. (Laughs) We're checking every detail to prepare for the event, so that we can make this a special opportunity that is unique to the in-person event this time as well. It is planned to be livestreamed on YouTube as well, so people from all over the world can look forward to it, including the setlist.

Thank you very much. It seems like you are putting in a lot of effort for this event, and I'm looking forward to it. Last but not least, Nogami-san, do you have any comments for the fans?

Nogami: Some of the development staff for *Splatoon 3* have been involved in the series for a long time, while there are new members who joined from this title. As representatives of squid researchers from all over the world, we have packed in what we would like to see in the Inkling world as much as we can, from gear designs to sound, and even the little details in the landscape. So, I hope everyone will enjoy all the details ink-luded! Of course, making *Splatoon* a fun game is the most important goal. But what we're also aiming for is creating a world where people have fun just by being there. As you grow, so do the people around you, and the *Splatoon* world itself evolves as well. We want everyone to enjoy this process together. We plan to add more features through free updates, including weapons and stages. So, I hope players will find their own way to play and enjoy the game. Also, I hope that those reading this article will also become members of the Inkling world. Please dive in from anywhere you like, in any way you want. See you there!

Thank you very much.